Canadian Transportation Agency

Office des transports du Canada

AIR TRAVEL ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY REPORT

May 2001

Accessible Transportation Directorate
Canadian Transportation Agency

Canada

Available in alternative formats and on the web site at
www.cta.gc.ca

For more information:

Canadian Transportation Agency
Accessible Transportation Directorate
15 Eddy Street
Hull QC K1A ON9

Voice: (819) 997-6828 or 1-800-883-1813 (Canada only)
TTY: (819) 953-9705 or 1-800-669-5575 (Canada only)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Canadian Transportation Agency (the Agency), a quasi-judicial administrative tribunal of the federal government, has the responsibility for ensuring that persons with disabilities obtain access to Canada's transportation system by eliminating unnecessary or unjustified barriers.

From May to August of 2000, the Agency conducted, over five-day periods, a survey of persons with disabilities and seniors travelling through six major airports (Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver). The questionnaire used was designed to provide an analytical tool to assess the impact of regulatory initiatives on travellers with disabilities.

The report provides: an overview of the results of the survey; information about existing obstacles to the mobility of persons with disabilities in the air transportation system; and a profile of the population of adults with disabilities who travel by air (including demographic data, information on the frequency, purpose and limitations of travel, and feedback on needs).

The target was to distribute at least 2,700 questionnaires to obtain 1,350 responses. A total of 4,231 surveys were distributed at the airports and 1,716 individuals responded by mail or phone, 1,120 of which indicated that they had a disability (65% of the total) and 448 (40%), that they had multiple disabilities. The sampling error of ±3% is considered very reliable.

The survey presents a "snapshot" of the travel experience of 1,120 adults with disabilities in the summer of 2000. This sample is

statistically valid and thus represents what all adults with disabilities would have experienced if they had taken an air trip in Canada at that time. The following points should be kept in mind when assessing and analyzing the results of the survey:

1. the study does not measure the level of accessibility of the air industry;
2. numerous data are not conclusive (because of the low number of respondents) and do not support that conclusions be drawn;
3. lastly, the study does not measure the level of expectation with regard to the provision of disability-related services and equipment to be provided.

Although the survey provides a fairly positive and encouraging picture of the experience of persons with disabilities and seniors who travel by air, it also indicates that many obstacles remain to the mobility of these travellers in Canada. The analysis further indicates that these obstacles are encountered every year by tens of thousands of adults who have a disability limiting their capacity to use transportation services. These persons furthermore experience air travel frustrations for the same reason other travellers do, like long lineups and check-in times.

Demographic Data

- Of persons with disabilities surveyed, senior citizens make up 81% of respondents and persons between 15 and 64 year of age, 19%. There were only 3 respondents under 15 years of age. A large majority (62%) of respondents were women and 3% identified as a couple.

- 515 (49%) respondents have no need to travel more often. Of the 536 other respondents: 373 said cost was a limiting factor, 62 identified anxiety about how their needs would be met, 28 blamed inadequate service in the past, and 9, inadequate equipment in the past.

- 666 (61%) respondents travelled to visit family or friends, 248 (23%) for vacationing, 67 (6%) for business and 27 (2%) for medical reasons.

- 437 of 496 respondents required the assistance (purpose not specified) of an attendant or other personal assistant during their trip.

- 716 (66%) respondents booked through a travel agent, and 253 (23%) directly with the carrier.

- 61% of those under 65 identified themselves as a person with a disability, compared to 50% for seniors with a disability.

- 441 (44%) respondents with disabilities said they requested extra services from air carriers to accommodate their needs.

Data on Airport Accessibility

- 894 (88%) respondents had little difficulty to get from the entrance to the check-in counter: people with a respiratory or cardiac condition experienced the most difficulty (17%).

- 312 (32%) respondents had problems with announcements, including 53% of persons who use a hearing aid.

- 807 (88%) respondents found flight information monitors easy to read; they proved hard to read for 37% of persons with a vision impairment.

- Signs at airports were accessible for 94% of travellers, except for 19% of persons with a vision impairment and 11% with an agility disability.

- The Help Desk was difficult to access for 96 (15%) respondents and the baggage retrieval area, for 124 (14%) travellers. Dining areas, shops and washrooms proved accessible to about 93% of travellers.

- Persons with a vision impairment had the most difficulty accessing all public areas: 23% with the Help Desk, 18% with the baggage retrieval area, 16% with shops, 15% with washrooms, 9% with dining areas.

- Accessibility at the Ottawa airport proved better than the average in four areas and equal to the average for washrooms. The Toronto airport was rated less accessible than the average in all five areas.

- 517 (46%) respondents required an accessible taxi, or shuttle, or city bus, or other transportation to get to or to leave the airport, and 52 of 410 (13%) said ground transportation was not accessible to them.

Data on Carrier Services and Equipment

- 94 (19%) respondents said that the relay of information on special requirements between the booking agent and the check-in counter left much to be desired.

- 489 (44%) respondents needed assistance to proceed to the boarding area, 373 to board the plane, and 357 to stow and retrieve baggage. The main users of these services were persons with an agility, mobility or vision impairment.

- 273 (24%) respondents requested a particular seat to accommodate their needs, and almost a quarter (24%) of seating requests were not met.

- The most common obstacle in terms of accessible equipment was the non-provision of needed seating accommodation. Few respondents identified other significant obstacles regarding carrier equipment.

- On-board announcements are much better than announcements at airports. Still, 156 (15%) respondents said in-flight information was not accessible.

- In-flight assistance was requested for three activities: 52 respondents needed help to get to and from the washroom, 34 with their meal, and 32 asked for a description of features and their location on-board.

- 368 of 811 respondents said that carrier staff asked about their needs during the flight: persons who had self-identified were more likely (48%) to obtain this service than passengers who had not (40%).

- Travellers said flight attendants (95%) and boarding personnel (94%) were of greater help to them than personnel at the check-in (92%).

- Only 19% of respondents said they knew if certain accessible equipment or features were available or not on the aircraft.

- 431 (44%) respondents needed help to get to the general public area and 124 (15%) to proceed to a representative of another carrier.

- Persons who self-identified requested this assistance in proportions of 75% and 26% respectively, compared to 15% and 7% for those who did not self-identify.

- The level of dissatisfaction with assistance reached 12% for those who needed to get to the general public area and 13% for those who needed to get to a representative of another airline.

- 92% of respondents were satisfied with the degree to which their needs were met and with the level of staff sensitivity to their needs.

Disability-Specific Data

- The 252 travellers using a manual wheelchair were among the most likely (64%) to need help to board an aircraft. Furthermore, 38 of 64 respondents were not able or allowed to stow their aid in-cabin.

- The 333 respondents using crutches, a walker or cane were the most likely (4%) to have their mobility aid lost or damaged. Also, 24 of 68 respondents could not stow their small mobility aid in-cabin.

- Travellers using crutches, a walker or cane had the most difficulty (23%) accessing baggage retrieval areas and were more likely (17%) to find the Help Desk hard to access.

- The 86 respondents with an agility impairment were the most likely (28%) to have booked their flight with the carrier and to have had problems with the relay of information from the booking agent to check-in staff.

- Travellers with a vision impairment experienced difficulties with airport accessibility, flight monitors, signs, and announcements made through the public address system at airports (34%) and in the aircraft (20%).

- Persons who are blind were most likely to get the requested seating, while persons who use a service animal encountered a

number of different problems with boarding, seating and in-flight assistance.

- 350 persons who are hard of hearing and 37 who are deaf, identified fewer problems than other respondents, given that they were less likely to request special services. A high number of these two groups have multiple disabilities.

- The 10 respondents with learning disabilities required assistance at many stages of their trip and usually indicated that they were satisfied with the service they received. They identified as problematic the relay of information between the booking agent and the check-in staff.

- Respondents with a respiratory or cardiac condition requested less assistance during their trip than other subgroups. They found it difficult to proceed from the main entrance to the check-in at the airport and were least likely to get the requested seating accommodation.

Impact of Results

- Results are generally encouraging in terms of adults with disabilities who travel by air in Canada without encountering obstacles to their mobility. Nonetheless, a good proportion of travellers with disabilities have or still face difficulties during their journey.

- A Goss Gilroy Inc. study shows that 715,000 adults with a transportation disability travelled by air in 1995:

  - 352,000 adults had a mobility impairment;
  - 339,000 adults had an agility impairment;
  - 74,000 adults had a hearing impairment;
  - 227,000 adults had a vision impairment; and
  - 203,000 adults had other disabilities.

When extrapolating Agency survey data with the Goss Gilroy study (1% of survey respondents represent 7,150 adults with transportation disabilities), results show that on a yearly basis, for air carrier-related accommodations:

- 322,500 adults with transportation disabilities are likely to request extra carrier services to accommodate their needs. These requests are not passed on adequately to the check-in agent in 18.6% of cases (representing 60,000 adults with transportation disabilities).

- Requests are likely to include:

  - 174,280 demands for seating accommodations, 37% of which were not met (64,480 occurrences);
  - 778,210 requests for boarding assistance (to proceed to the boarding area, to en-plane, to stow and retrieve baggage);
  - 89,990 demands for in-flight assistance (to move to and from the washroom, to identify meals, to describe features and their location;
  - 425,490 requests for de-boarding assistance (to reach the public area of the airport or a representative of another carrier).

- 659,230 adults with transportation disabilities are likely to be satisfied with the way carriers met their needs while 55,870 are likely not to be satisfied with carrier-provided disability-related accommodations.

Results show that on a yearly basis, for airport operator-related accommodations:

- 88,320 adults with transportation disabilities are likely to find it difficult to get from the terminal entrance to the carrier check-in counter.

- Announcements over public address systems at airports are not likely to be accessible to 226,020 adults with transportation disabilities.

- The Help Desk and baggage retrieval facilities are not likely to be accessible to 107,250 and 97,430 adults with transportation disabilities, respectively.

- 330,050 persons with transportation disabilities are likely to require an accessible taxi, shuttle, city bus, or other transportation, 41,860 of which will not be satisfied with their level of accessibility.

Conclusion

The air travel industry has made great strides and progress over the last decade in providing transportation services which are increasingly accessible to all Canadians, including persons with disabilities. The survey results confirm this for the issues it addressed, and the industry should be commended for this achievement.

Additional efforts, nonetheless, are required to remove the remaining obstacles identified in this report, thus ensuring the greater mobility of Canadians with disabilities who travel by air. This will become increasingly important, as the Canadian population will be aging rapidly in the years to come.

Based on this study's findings and on the convergence of data, lessons learned are as follows:

- Carriers need to address a number of operational issues, such as the relay of information and seating accommodations.

- Carriers need to assess, review and improve disability-related training of their staff and agents .

- Airport operators need to improve communications in airports, including public address announcements and the availability of TTYs or their equivalent.

- The Agency, in collaboration with the industry and the community of persons with disabilities, needs to establish accessibility standards for airport operations and equipment, including ground transportation.

- The Agency and the industry need to establish a partnership to better inform the community of persons with disabilities of the accessible equipment, accommodations and services made available to them.

AIR TRAVEL ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Transportation Agency (the Agency) is a quasi-judicial administrative tribunal of the federal government. Under Canadian legislation, the Agency has the responsibility for ensuring that persons with disabilities obtain access to Canada's transportation system by eliminating unnecessary or unjustified barriers. The Agency works to achieve this goal by developing and administering accessibility standards covering the transportation network under federal jurisdiction, by resolving complaints from travellers with disabilities, and by consulting with stakeholders.

During the summer of the year 2000, the Agency conducted a survey of persons with disabilities and seniors travelling through major Canadian airports to learn more about achievements in accessible transportation and remaining obstacles to the mobility of persons with disabilities. The report provides an overview of the results of the Air Travel Accessibility Survey and explains the research methods used to conduct the survey. The report also analyzes the results in the context of current and future Agency work to improve the level of accessibility of the air transportation network.

1.1 Rationale for a User Survey

The Agency's current regulatory policy relies heavily on voluntary industry implementation of accessibility standards set forth in regulations, codes of practice and inquiry reports. Monitoring tools used to gauge compliance with accessibility standards focus on the availability of services and equipment, and on staff training by carriers and terminal operators. Data from the survey provide information that can be used to assess the effectiveness of Agency regulations and

codes of practice, and information on the type of accommodations which are currently provided and which help improve the travel experience of persons with disabilities.

The survey data also provide valuable information about existing obstacles to the mobility of persons with disabilities in the federal air transportation system, even where there is full industry compliance with existing standards. In addition, the survey provides a profile of the population of Canadians with disabilities who travel by air, which includes demographic data, information on the frequency, purpose and limitations of their travel, and feedback on their needs. This information should give the Agency a better appraisal of where existing regulatory products need to be strengthened, and where barriers to mobility remain which fall outside of the purview of its existing regulations and codes of practice.

1.2 Usefulness of the User Survey

Overall, this information should assist the Agency in setting priorities for action in strengthening existing regulatory tools and in assessing the need to set standards in uncharted areas. Firstly, travellers with disabilities are identifying problems in areas where the air transportation industry is required to provide accessible services and equipment. Secondly, these travellers are also reporting barriers in areas not yet addressed by the Agency, which will result in an assessment of the need to set standards in those areas.

Transportation service providers will find the survey data useful because it provides a profile of travellers with disabilities and their needs. This information should allow airport operators and air carriers to make their operations more accessible by focussing on improvements to services and accommodations that better respond to these needs. The data should also provide organizations of and for persons with disabilities with an overview of the obstacles their members encounter when they travel by air. Finally, the survey should provide the community of persons with disabilities as well as service

providers with an overview of travel preferences and various services needed to make air travel easier for persons with disabilities.

2. OVERVIEW OF SURVEY METHOD

Distribution methods considered include mail-in surveys, interviews by phone or in person, and distribution and collection of a self-administered questionnaire. The latter method was selected along with personal intercepts (in-person contacts) to approach respondents during their travel experience. This approach not only allowed a random sample of people in the survey target group to be reached, but also gave respondents more flexibility regarding when and how to respond to the survey.

2.1 Distribution Targets

The target was to distribute at least 2,700 questionnaires to obtain 1,350 responses. Ultimately, a total of 4,231 surveys were distributed at airports and 1,716 responses were collected either by mail or phone. Of the 1,716 respondents, 1,120 indicated that they had a disability (65% of the total).

From May to August of 2000, distribution of the questionnaire to persons with disabilities and to seniors over five-day periods was undertaken. The six targeted airports (Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver) were chosen on the basis of their high volume of traffic and on the need for regional representation of travel conditions across Canada. To ensure reliable survey data, sample size and distribution targets were set for each airport, by using both Statistics Canada aviation statistics and data from the 1991 Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS).

Travellers over the age of 65 were included because they are four times as likely to have a disability as other Canadians. This made it possible to reach a high number of travellers with physical impairments

or functional limitations which may affect their ability to travel by air. Team members had to identify and approach potential respondents, explain the purpose of the survey, and collect contact information to follow up with respondents at a later date.

The most common means of response was filling out the print version of the questionnaire and returning it in a pre-stamped, self-addressed envelope. Thirty (30) individuals (less than 3%) responded to the survey by phone. Questionnaires were received by mail shortly after the first survey in May, up to September 8. Follow-up calls were conducted over the course of the summer and up to the last week in which survey data was collected.

The questionnaire was not designed to measure industry compliance with the Agency's regulations and codes of practice. It was, however, designed to provide an analytical tool to assess the impact of these regulatory initiatives on the consumer's air travel experience. To give the proper context to each question, the 61 questions were organized to follow the phases of a trip. The questionnaire was pre-tested with focus groups.

2.2 Distribution Results

Distribution and response targets for each city were based on population and travel statistics from Statistics Canada, and were exceeded at all airports surveyed. Table 1 shows the distribution and response rates for each airport and for the project as a whole.

SEE TABLE 1 (p. 43)

2.3 Returns and Sampling Error

After the questionnaires were received and the data tabulated, statistical analysis of the data was completed, and the sampling error determined for the total sample of respondents and for various segments thereof. The sampling error is the error which can arise when

data had been collected from a part of, rather than the whole population. The sampling error provides a measure of the precision with which the survey approximates the average results that would have been obtained if all travellers had been surveyed. Statistical analyses having a sampling error of ±3% are considered to be very reliable in their representation of the responses from the target group.

Table 2 provides the sampling errors for all respondents and each of the main subgroups of respondents that will be discussed in this report. The sample sizes obtained for this survey project were large enough to provide a high degree of confidence in the representativeness of the sample.

SEE TABLE 2 (p. 44)

Sampling errors were not determined for each subgroup of persons with disabilities (i.e. travellers with mobility impairments, individuals using particular devices or aids, etc.). In all cases where the results of the survey are analyzed using the responses from various subgroups, the sample size for each of these subgroups will be provided. Where the sample of a subgroup of respondents is small, the results cannot be relied upon to represent the experience of that particular group through extrapolation.

Ekos Research Associates, a firm specializng in public opinion research, acted as consultants on this project. Also, the presentation of data and their analysis were reviewed and completed by an analyst not associated with the design of the survey or the survey tool, nor with the distribution of the questionnaire or the gathering of the data.

3. SURVEY DATA

3.1 Overview of Data Presentation

The analysis of the survey data mirrors how the questionnaire was organized. The data provide a profile of the travellers who participated

in the survey and an overview of the experience of respondents at each of the main stages of the trip. This overview of the survey results focusses mainly on the responses from persons with disabilities. It also highlights the information which has the greatest bearing on the work of the Accessible Transportation Directorate at the Agency.

Tables found at the end of this report are used to graphically present some of the data. All of the key data is presented in a narrative form in this report. Data from unpublished tables is also used in the descriptive part to provide additional details on issues raised in the survey.

3.2 Sampling Rationale

When referring to the data in the tables, the total number of cases (#) (e.g., the denominators) used in the analysis vary for each question since some respondents did not answer all questions. Non-responses were eliminated from the denominator when calculating percentages (%). As well, more than one response was possible for some questions, which made the number of cases for those questions greater than the number of respondents (where respondents checked multiple disabilities or aids).

It follows that some needs identified by subgroups of respondents may not be relevant. For instance, the results may show that respondents who are both deaf and have a mobility impairment need assistance to board an aircraft. In this example, the particular need for assistance was tabulated for each disability, even though it has probably nothing to do with deafness.

3.3 Traveller Profile

As previously noted, 65% of respondents (1,120) indicated that they had a disability. Table 3 provides a breakdown of the sample of respondents with disabilities. Other data show that, of the 1,120 respondents with disabilities, 448 (40%) indicated that they had

multiple disabilities, and are counted more than once for disability-related questions.

Of the 1,716 respondents, a total of 1,301 (82%) were 65 years of age and over. Of these seniors, 65% (849) indicated having some kind of disability and 49% said they use a disability-related aid or device when travelling.

SEE TABLE 3 (p. 45)

Even if persons with "invisible" disabilities were more difficult to identify, the proportion of respondents within the various disability categories is roughly the same as that identified by Statistics Canada in the 1991 HALS, with one notable exception: HALS data showed 50% of persons with disabilities had an agility impairment compared to 8% for the survey data. One possible explanation is that HALS conducted telephone interviews and, if a condition like arthritis was described, interviewers may have prompted respondents to answer an agility impairment. The Agency's survey did not and could not do this because 97% of the questionnaires were received by mail.

Some respondents did not define a disability category for themselves, yet they indicated having functional limitations or particular travel-related needs. The survey did not identify a disability category for these respondents even where, for example, they specified that they had Parkinson's disease but did not associate any particular impairment with the condition.

3.4 Aids and Devices Used by Travellers with Disabilities

In addition to determining the type of disabilities of the travellers, the survey helped identify aids or devices used by respondents when travelling by air. Responses to this question provide a gauge of the severity of the disability of respondents and also enable a more in-depth analysis of needs specific to categories of disability. Thus, a

better profile was established of the travellers responding to the survey and their disability-related needs.

SEE TABLE 4 (p. 46)

Crutches, walkers and canes (excluding white canes) were the most commonly used category of aids: 333 (30%) respondents representing all disability groups used this type of aid. Manual wheelchairs were used by 252 (23%) respondents and hearing devices, by 200 (18%) respondents.

3.5 Use of Aids and Devices by Disability

Mobility Impairment – People with a mobility impairment represent 63% of the 1,120 respondents with disabilities (Table 3). Of these 706 respondents, 29 (4%) use a scooter, 226 (32%) a manual wheelchair, 9 (1%) a power wheelchair, 310 (44%) crutches, a walker or cane, and 27 (4%) a brace or prosthetic. Some 137 respondents (19%) in this group used no aid or device when travelling, some used more than one, and others who used "mobility aids" did not indicate that they had a mobility impairment as such (most indicated that they had some other disability or health condition).

Agility Impairment – Respondents with an agility impairment represent 8% of respondents with disabilities. Of the 86 respondents in this category, 31 (36%) used a manual wheelchair, and 33 (38%) used crutches, a walker or cane. Fourteen percent (14%) of these travellers used no devices or aids.

Vision Impairment – The 23 respondents who are blind and the 103 with low vision represent 11% of respondents with disabilities. Of these 126 persons with a vision impairment, 23 (18%) used a white cane, 9 (7%) an optical device other than glasses or contact lenses, and 6 (5%) a guide dog. Thirty (30) of these respondents (24%) indicated they used no aid or device.

Hearing Impairment – The 37 respondents who are deaf and the 350 who are hard of hearing represent 35% of respondents with disabilities. Nineteen (19) respondents who are deaf (51%) and 162 who are hard of hearing (46%) use a hearing aid. Of the 387 respondents with a hearing impairment, 105 (27%) indicated they use no aid or device when travelling.

Other Disabilities – Ten (10) travellers said they had a learning disability, 223 a respiratory or cardiac condition, and 133 a disability or health condition other than those listed in the response categories (i.e. Parkinson's disease, cerebral palsy, arthritis, asthma and other conditions).

3.6 Demographic Data

Senior citizens (65 years of age and over) make up 81% of respondents with disabilities. Persons between 15 and 64 years of age represent 19% of respondents. Only 3 respondents were under 15 years of age.

A large majority (62%) of respondents with disabilities were women and 3% identified as a couple. Much more women than men are included in the survey. This is likely because when couples were approached at airports to fill out a questionnaire, women were more prone to take one.

The sample of respondents with disabilities included residents of all provinces and territories, (except for Nunavut) and 86 respondents (8%) from other countries. The vast majority of respondents are residents of the five provinces (Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia) in which the survey was conducted.

3.7 Trip-related Data

Nearly half (48%) of the respondents with disabilities travel by air 2 to 4 times a year. Infrequent flyers (one or less time a year) represent

38% of travellers with disabilities and include 5 of the 9 respondents using a power wheelchair and 44% of the 103 persons with low vision. Frequent flyers (5 or more times a year) represent 14% of respondents and include 8 of the 23 individuals who are blind and 19% of the 86 respondents with an agility impairment. Persons who are deaf are less likely to be frequent travellers, as only 2 of 37 respondents travelled on aircraft five times a year or more.

Nearly half (49%) of the persons with disabilities who responded do not travel more often because they have no need to do so. Of the 536 other respondents, 70% identified cost as a limiting factor; 12% said they were anxious about how their needs would be met; 5% pointed to inadequate service in the past; and 2% cited inadequate equipment in the past.

About a third (32%) of respondents with disabilities were on short trips (7 days or less), and the most common travel period was over two weeks in duration. There was no trend in the length of trip according to various disabilities. Roughly half of the flights did not involve a change of plane, while 37% of respondents made one stop-over and 14%, more than one stop-over. Again, there was no trend that deviated from the general response to this question.

Respondents were asked about the size of the aircraft they travelled on. Travellers using manual and power wheelchairs were at least as likely to have flown on small aircraft as the average respondent. Interestingly, 6 of the 44 respondents using a scooter or power wheelchair travelled on a small aircraft, despite the limiting factors of these aircraft. Data do not indicate that travellers with different disabilities or equipment needs avoid flying on small aircraft to ensure access to features present only on larger aircraft.

A great majority of respondents (83%) travelled by air for leisure activities such as visiting family or friends, or vacationing. Business and medical purposes accounted for 6% and 2%, respectively, of the reason for travel.

3.8 Attendants and Personal Assistants

Of the 496 respondents who answered the question, 437 (88%) said they required the assistance of an attendant or other personal assistant during their trip. The nature of this assistance or the relationship of the attendant or assistant to the traveller (i.e. carrier staff, health professional, family, etc.) were not specified in the survey. It is therefore not known if respondents used the services of a full-time or "certified" attendant who provided personal services, or if they travelled with a spouse, family member or friend who stored and retrieved carry-on baggage or pushed a manual wheelchair to the boarding gate, or if air carrier staff provided the assistance.

Sixteen (16) of the 23 persons who are blind and 5 of the 10 with a learning disability who were surveyed indicated that they needed the assistance of an attendant or other person. There were no significant trends in the need for this service among the subgroups of respondents with disabilities.

3.9 Data Related to Booking

Most respondents with disabilities (66%) booked through a travel agent and slightly less than one quarter (23%), booked directly with the carrier. Roughly half (52%) of persons with a disabilities identified as such when booking their trip, representing 58% of all disabilities (given some respondents have more than one disability). Individuals who are blind (20 of 23), or have a learning disability (7 of 10), or have an agility (59 of 85) or mobility (67%) impairment were more likely to self-identify than individuals who are hard of hearing (39%), or have a respiratory or cardiac condition (48%), or are deaf (17 out of 35).

Persons 65 years of age and older with a disability were significantly less likely to self-identify than respondents with disabilities under the age of 65. Only 50% of seniors with a disability identified as such to the booking agent, compared to 61% for respondents under 65 years of age.

Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents with disabilities indicated that they requested extra services from air carriers to accommodate their needs. This includes 17 of 22 persons who are blind, 6 of the 10 respondents with a learning disability, 59% of individuals with an agility impairment, 57% of travellers with a mobility impairment, 51% of persons with low vision, 17 of 35 individuals who are deaf, and 33% of travellers who are hard of hearing.

Respondents rated the extent to which their booking agent was familiar with the services that the air carrier could provide to accommodate their needs. In general, respondents indicated that there was really no problem with the availability of service-related information from their booking agent.

3.10 Airport Accessibility

The survey asked a series of questions on the accessibility of the airport where the questionnaire was distributed.

3.10.1 Getting from the Entrance to the Check-in Counter

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of persons with disabilities did not encounter any major difficulty getting from the entrance to the check-in counter. The most difficulty was experienced at the Toronto (20%) and Montreal (16%) airports. The smallest of the airports surveyed (Halifax) presented the least difficulties (8%). Respondents with a respiratory or cardiac condition were the most likely to find it difficult to get from the entrance to the check-in counter. Seventeen percent (17%) of this subgroup answered 'Not at All' or 'To a Small Extent', as did 15% of persons with an agility impairment and of persons using crutches, a walker or cane.

3.10.2 Communications Within the Airport

The accessibility of communication at airports was also rated. Information broadcasted via the public address system appears less

accessible than flight information monitors, and signage proved the least problematic.

SEE TABLE 5 (p. 47)

Public address systems were problematic at the 6 airports, as 32% of respondents with disabilities said that announcements were difficult to understand (answering 'Not at All' or 'To a Small Extent'): 23% rated them difficult to understand at the Montreal airport and 37% at the Toronto airport. Persons with a hearing impairment had the greatest difficulty understanding the announcements: 47% of travellers who are hard of hearing as well as 53% of persons wearing a hearing aid indicated that understanding the announcements was not easy. This problem was also experienced by 30% of 693 respondents who have a mobility or agility impairment.

Flight Information monitors were more accessible, as 88% of respondents with disabilities found them easy to read. The Ottawa airport (5%) was the least problematic in this respect while the Toronto airport proved the most problematic (18%). As might be expected, flight monitor information was hard to read for 37% of persons with a vision impairment and for 13 of 29 respondents using a visual aid (optical device, white cane, service animal). As well, this problem was experienced by 14% of respondents who have a mobility or agility impairment.

Signage at the airports (for gates, telephones, washrooms, etc.) was the most accessible communication feature for 94% of respondents. Persons who have a vision impairment (19%) or an agility impairment (11%) were more likely to indicate that signage was problematic.

3.10.3 Access to Main Areas of the Airport

Respondents rated the five main areas of the airport: 83% said that they had used the washrooms, 82% the baggage retrieval area, 58% the Help Desk, and 53% the dining areas and shops. Overall, the

baggage retrieval and the Help Desk areas proved the most problematic in terms of accessibility.

Accessibility at the Ottawa airport proved better than the average in four areas and equal to the average for washrooms. The Toronto airport was rated less accessible than the average in all five areas. Persons with a visual impairment systematically found the five facilities less accessible than did other respondents with disabilities. Travellers with a mobility or an agility impairment reported the same level of accessibility as other respondents. Thus, the use of a mobility aid is not an aggravating factor in this regard.

SEE TABLE 6 (p. 48)

Halifax International Airport – The baggage retrieval area posed the greatest problems for travellers at the Halifax airport, as 11% of persons with disabilities rated this facility difficult to access; 9% of travellers gave the shops and dining areas a poor rating; and 7% and 6% said the washrooms and Help Desk were, respectively, hard to access. The Help Desk facility at this airport had the best accessibility ratings of the six airports surveyed.

Montreal Dorval International Airport – The baggage retrieval area (18% – the worst rating among all airports) and Help Desk (17%) were rated hard to access at Dorval Airport (Montreal). The shops were difficult to access for 8% of respondents; 7% gave the washrooms a poor rating, and 98% (the best showing for all airports) said the dining areas were accessible.

Ottawa International Airport – This airport proved the most accessible of all airports surveyed. The Help Desk was the most difficult area to access (14% of respondents with disabilities), followed by the baggage retrieval area (8% – the best rating for the 6 airports). The washrooms were hard to access for 6% of respondents with disabilities, and the dining areas for 5%. The shops were the most accessible (96% of respondents) area.

Toronto Pearson International Airport – The Help Desk was the least accessible area at the Toronto airport, as 22% of respondents with disabilities rated this facility accessible 'To a Small Extent' or less, followed by the baggage retrieval area (17%), and dining areas (12%). The dining areas and the Help Desk were the most poorly rated facilities among the 6 airports. The shops and washrooms were difficult to access for 9% and 7% of travellers with a disability, respectively.

Calgary International Airport – Fifteen percent (15%) of respondents with disabilities indicated that the Help desk was the least accessible area at the Calgary airport. The Baggage Retrieval was difficult to access for 12% of respondents, while 7% of travellers rated poorly the dining areas. The other 2 areas were rated better than the average for all airports: 95% and 96% found the washrooms and shops accessible, respectively. The shops and washrooms, at this airport, were rated more accessible than at any of the other airports.

Vancouver International Airport – The baggage retrieval area proved the most difficult area to access at the Vancouver airport (14% of respondents with disabilities), followed by the Help Desk (12%), the washrooms (7%), and the shops (6%). The dining areas presented the least obstacles at this airport, as 98% of respondents said they were accessible.

3.11 Check-in

Relay of Information – This section focusses on the communication of key information between the air carrier personnel and travellers. More specifically, whether information on special requests made at booking was properly passed on to the check-in staff. Nineteen percent (19%) of respondents with disabilities reported that this left much to be desired.

This breakdown in communication could be the source of problems experienced by many passengers later on in their trip. Persons with an agility impairment were the most likely to have rated the relay of

information as poor (15 of 58 respondents), and persons with a sensory (hearing, visual) disability said there were problems in 20% of the cases.

Seven (7) of 32 respondents who use a visual aid indicated that this communication had been poor. The best performance was experienced by persons using a manual wheelchair, because only 15% said that the information had been passed on to check-in staff 'To a Small Extent' or less.

Familiarity with Carrier Services – Respondents were asked if personnel at the check-in were familiar with the services the carrier could provide to accommodate their needs, and 92% of respondents with disabilities said staff were familiar. The greatest difficulty in this regard was encountered by 7 of 37 respondents who use a visual aid and 12 of 63 travellers who use a scooter, a power wheelchair, a brace, or prosthetic. They gave their check-in staff a low rating. Respondents using a hearing device (6%) and persons using a manual wheelchair (7%) were the least likely to have encountered a difficulty in this regard.

Assistance at Check-in – A great majority of respondents with disabilities (91%) said that the assistance provided by check-in staff met their needs 'To a Moderate Extent' or better. Among those who were dissatisfied, 7 of 39 respondents who use a visual aid, 7 of 41 persons who use a scooter or power wheelchair. Fourteen (14%) of respondents with agility impairments indicated that the assistance did not adequately meet their needs.

3.12 Boarding

Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents with disabilities said they needed assistance to proceed to the boarding area, and a third needed assistance to board the plane or to stow and retrieve baggage. Persons with a hearing impairment were the least likely to ask for assistance when boarding.

SEE TABLE 7 (p. 49)

Proceeding to the Boarding Area – The small sample of people with learning disabilities (8 out of 10) required the most assistance in getting to the boarding area, followed by 15 of the 23 respondents who are blind and 65% of individuals with an agility impairment, followed by 58% of travellers with a mobility impairment. All in all, 78% of persons using a wheelchair asked for this service. As many as 12% of travellers with disabilities rated the service provided as being poor.

Boarding the Aircraft – Respondents with an agility impairment (60%) and 14 of the 23 persons who are blind, and 6 of the 10 individuals who have a learning disability were nearly twice as likely to require assistance boarding the aircraft as other travellers with disabilities. Of all boarding services, help to enplane was the one better rated (91%).

Stowing and Retrieving Baggage – The three groups who required assistance most often to stow and retrieve their baggage were as follows: respondents using a visual aid (63%), persons with an agility impairment (62%) and individuals using a manual wheelchair (56%). Of those who needed help with their baggage, 15% indicated that the assistance provided did not adequately meet their needs. As such, this was the most problematic type of boarding assistance reported in the survey.

Boarding Personnel Training – Respondents with disabilities rated the extent to which carrier staff were familiar with the procedures for assisting them when boarding, and 95% indicated that staff were at least moderately familiar with the airline procedures for assisting them. Of those who gave a low rating, respondents who use a brace or prosthetic (5 of 24), and those who use a scooter (5 of 31), were more likely to find that staff were not familiar with these procedures.

3.13 Seating

Some 24% of travellers with disabilities said that they requested a particular seat to accommodate their needs, which includes 31% of the

521 travellers who self-identified as having a disability. Respondents who use a visual aid (20 of 43) and persons who use a scooter or power wheelchair (12 of 44) were more likely to request a particular seat to accommodate their needs. Persons with a hearing impairment were the least likely (21%) to request a seating accommodation.

SEE TABLE 8 (p. 50)

SEE TABLE 9 (p. 51)

Seat with moveable armrest – Only 10% of all travellers with disabilities who responded to this question asked for a seat with a moveable armrest, making this feature the least often requested. Such requests were accommodated in 76% of the cases.

More Leg room – Requests for a seat with more leg room (bulkhead seat) were the most common, as 49% of the 239 passengers with disabilities who answered the question asked for this accommodation. This request was the least often satisfied, as 33% of those who made the demand were not provided with this accommodation.

Seat closer to entrance – The next most popular seating request was for a seat closer to the entrance: 38% of the 212 respondents who answered the question asked for this feature and 30% of them did not get it. Also, 49% of respondents who use a scooter or wheelchair and answered this question asked for this accommodation – which was provided 75% of the time.

Seat closer to the washroom – Fifty-four (54) of 200 respondents asked for a seat closer to the washroom, and 40 were given such seating, which makes this the type of seating request most often honoured by the carriers.

Other Seating Requests – Sixty-four percent (64%) of persons with disabilities said they had made a request for a seating accommodation

other than those listed above, and 87% were assigned the requested seat.

3.14 In-Flight Services

On-board Announcements – The communication of announcements on-board is much better than at airports, because 15% of respondents with disabilities said in-flight information was not clear for them. Travellers with sensory disabilities had the most difficulties in this regard: 27% of those who are deaf or hard of hearing, and 19% of those who are blind or have low vision.

In-flight Assistance – Travellers were asked about their use of and level of satisfaction with in-flight services to accommodate their needs. For example, having the features of the plane and their location explained verbally, receiving assistance to move to and from the washroom, and getting help to cut or identify the contents of meals.

The most common (6%) type of assistance requested by respondents who answered this question was to move to and from the aircraft washroom. It is also the type of help with which passengers were most often satisfied, because 39 of 44 respondents said it met their needs 'To a Moderate Extent' or better.

Just under 4% of travellers with disabilities said that they required assistance with meals. Twenty-one (21) of the 26 respondents were satisfied with the way this assistance met their needs, while 5 persons who required help with meals indicated that their needs were met 'To a Small Extent' or 'Not at All'.

Only 32 (3%) of respondents with disabilities asked for a description of key features on the plane. This is very important for those who do need it because it can increase their independence and orientation with the accommodations of the aircraft. Twenty-five of the 31 travellers who answered the question were satisfied with the service.

Inquiries About Passenger Needs – Forty-five percent (45%) of travellers with disabilities who responded to this question said that carrier staff stopped to inquire about their needs during the flight. This service is to be provided upon request to passengers. The survey does not establish if this service had been requested by the respondents.

Persons who are blind were more likely (12 of 17) than others to have staff inquire about their needs. As well, persons with disabilities who had self-identified as having a disability were more likely (48%) to obtain this service than passengers who did not self-identify (41%).

Satisfaction with flight attendant service – Satisfaction with the help flight attendants provided was quite high, because 95% of passengers with disabilities said this assistance met their needs. Persons with a vision impairment were more likely (10%) than others to say that this help had not met their needs.

3.15 Equipment Needs

Few passengers are aware of and use the equipment provided by carriers, as no less than 81% of respondents said they did not know if certain equipment or features were available on the aircraft. Most respondents with disabilities (between 77% and 86%) were not aware of (did not notice) the availability of features which might be found on-board, either because they are not related to their needs, or they do not know what type of features to expect, or they did not happen to use the equipment.

Of those who were aware of the accessibility features which might be found on the aircraft, 68% said their plane was equipped with tactile row markers; 57% said that the aircraft washroom had the accessibility features they required; 29% said that the plane was equipped with an on-board wheelchair; and 15% said that the plane had a washroom accessible to an on-board wheelchair.

SEE TABLE 10 (p. 52)

Among those who responded that they were aware of and used the equipment listed, satisfaction with how the equipment met their needs was generally high. Washroom features met the needs of respondents in 97% of cases, and the accessibility of the washroom, 93% of the time.

SEE TABLE 11 (p. 53)

3.16 De-boarding

Assistance Required when Leaving the Aircraft – After the plane has landed, the carrier is responsible for assisting, upon request, persons with disabilities who need help proceeding to the general public area of the airport or to a representative of another carrier. Of those who answered this question, 44% needed help to get to the general public area and 15% to proceed to a representative of another carrier. Travellers who self-identified were much more likely to request assistance for these two activities (75% and 26% respectively) than those who did not self-identify (15% and 7%).

SEE TABLE 12 (p. 54)

Of travellers who responded to this question, the following two groups were more likely to request assistance to proceed to the public area of the airport: persons who use a visual aid (23 of 36) as well as respondents who use a scooter, manual wheelchair or electric wheelchair (84%). This last group (scooter, manual wheelchair, electric wheelchair) was also more likely to request assistance to reach a representative of another carrier (26%).

Satisfaction with Assistance when De-boarding – Twelve percent (12%) of respondents who received assistance moving to the general public area said that the help provided did not meet their needs, and 13% of those who had help reaching another carrier gave a poor rating of this assistance.

3.17 Ground Transportation

Of the ground transportation services surveyed, accessible taxis (13%) and shuttles (12%) were the most commonly used means of accessible public transportation and city buses (2%), the least used. Also, 19% of respondents used another type of ground transportation. Persons with an agility impairment were the most likely (57%) to use one of these four services, followed by 21 of 37 respondents who are deaf as well as 53% of individuals who use a scooter, manual wheelchair or electric wheelchair. Respondents who are hard of hearing were the least likely (40%) to use one of these services, followed by persons who have a visual impairment (41%).

SEE TABLE 13 (p. 55)

Respondents expressed the greatest satisfaction with accessible taxis (90%). Accessible shuttle services received a low satisfaction rating in 15% of cases. Accessible city bus services received the lowest satisfaction rating, as 4 of 19 respondents with disabilities indicated that it met their needs 'To a Small Extent' or less.

3.18 Services for Travellers with Service Animals

A section of the questionnaire was dedicated to persons who travel with a service animal. These questions were only applicable to five respondents, however, which is too small a sample to draw any conclusion. Nonetheless, their responses provide insight on the challenges they experienced.

Service Animal Seating – Four (4) of the 5 persons surveyed who travelled with a service animal indicated that their service animal was permitted to remain on the floor at their seat. All respondents, including the one person whose dog was not permitted to remain on the floor at the passenger seat, indicated that there was adequate space for their service animal. One respondent no longer wants to fly with a guide dog

since the bulkhead seats (which provide more room) were difficult to get and "rarely guaranteed".

Three out of four respondents indicated that it was not easy to access a relief area for their dog at the airport terminal. This facility was one which respondents in the survey's pre-testing focus groups identified as important, but which is not covered in any of the Agency's codes or regulations.

Overall Experience with a Service Animal – The sample of respondents who answered the question on overall satisfaction is too small to draw any conclusion on this issue. Feedback is, however, in line with anecdotal evidence made available to the Canadian Transportation Agency.

3.19 Alternative Formats

The sample of respondents to this question is too small to draw conclusions. Respondents indicated having required, on 24 occasions, documents in formats such as braille, large print, audio cassette or computer diskette. Six (6) of the 8 respondents who asked for confirmation of their flight services in an alternative format received it. Seven (7) of the 8 individuals who asked for their travel itinerary in an alternate format, obtained it. Five (5) travellers asked for an on-board passenger briefing card in an alternative format and 4 received it. Respondents indicated that these requests were met in 19 of the 24 occurrences.

SEE TABLE 14 (p. 56)

3.20 Services for Persons with a Hearing Impairment

Questions in this section pertained to the accessibility of TTY-related (teletypewriter) services and equipment, and to the availability of pen and paper at key points of contact with carrier and airport personnel.

TTY Line for Booking and at Airport – The sample of respondents on the availability of TTYs for booking or at the airport is too small to draw conclusions. However, 10 respondents indicated that there was a TTY number available for booking purposes; 10 said none was available, and 19 did not know either way. One person out of 350 who is hard of hearing and 2 out of 37 persons who are deaf indicated that they required a TTY at the airport. These 3 respondents indicated this equipment was not available.

Pen and Paper at Points of Contact – Most respondents with a hearing impairment did not know if pen and paper had been available at the key points of contact with personnel. Thirteen (13) respondents indicated that there was pen and paper available both at the airport information desk and at the check-in counter, 4 answered that it was available at the boarding gate and 5 said it was available on the plane. Again, the sample of respondents to this question is too small to draw conclusions.

3.21 Mobility Aids

Nine questions were dedicated to learning more about the services made available to persons who use a mobility aid when travelling. For this section, the data has been analyzed for the subgroup of 253 respondents who answered the questions and indicated that they used a scooter (16 people), a manual wheelchair (148), a power wheelchair (6), or crutches, a walker or cane (147). A single person can be using more than one mobility aid during the course of the trip.

Mobility Aids Carried Free of Charge – Of those who answered the first question in this section, 97% of persons who use a mobility aid indicated that their aids were carried free of charge. Of the 8 respondents who did not have their aids carried free of charge, 5 used manual wheelchairs and 4 used either crutches, a walker or cane. One of these 8 persons travelled on a small aircraft not covered under Agency regulations or codes.

SEE TABLE 15 (p. 57)

Eighty-eight of 92 persons who use a manual folding wheelchair indicated that they were permitted to use their manual folding wheelchair up to the boarding gate. In one of the 6 cases, a small plane was involved.

Assistance to Transfer to a Carrier Mobility Aid – A total of eighty-eight (88) respondents (5 who use a scooter, 60 a manual wheelchair, 4 a power wheelchair, and 45 crutches, a walker or cane), or 52% of those who responded to this question, said that they needed assistance in transferring from their mobility aid to the carriers' mobility aid. Of those, 8% indicated that the assistance met their needs only 'To a Small Extent' or 'Not at All'.

Roughly 69 of 215 respondents (32%) needed assistance to transfer from a mobility aid to their passenger seat. This includes 40% of 153 respondents who use a scooter or a wheelchair, and 24% of 119 respondents who use crutches, a walker or cane. Overall, 87% of respondents indicated that this assistance met their needs.

Thirty-eight (38) of 64 persons who use a manual wheelchair as well as 24 of 68 respondents who use crutches, a walker or cane were not permitted to stow their aid in the aircraft cabin. The survey could not establish if on-board space for the carriage of mobility aids did exist and, if so, if it was used to store the mobility aid of another passenger.

Ninety-five percent (95%) of respondents said that they were moderately to entirely satisfied with the disassembly and reassembly of their mobility aids.

Mobility Aid Lost or Damaged – While only 3% of respondents indicated that their mobility aid had been lost or damaged by the carrier during their trip, this represents 18 separate incidents[1] (1 scooter, 7 manual wheelchairs, and 14 small mobility aids such as crutches, a

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[1]Please note that some respondents were using more than one mobility aid.

walker or cane.) In only one instance did the carrier offer a suitable temporary replacement of the aid, and on no occasion did the carrier offer to replace or reimburse the passenger for the cost of the aid.

Unfortunately, the data is not conclusive: individuals did not indicate if the carrier was able to repair a damaged mobility aid on-site before returning it to the passenger; and it does not indicate if the aid was misplaced (not lost) and returned to the traveller at the airport, after a delay.

3.22 Overall Experience

Of respondents who answered the question, 92% indicated that the carrier respected their right to determine the level of service they required. Among the 8% who were dissatisfied are respondents who are hard of hearing (10%) as well as persons who use a brace or prosthetic (5 of 25) were more likely to be dissatisfied, along with individuals who use crutches, a walker or cane and did not self-identify (12%) – as opposed to 7% for those that did self-identify. Respondents more likely to be satisfied were individuals using a wheelchair (95%) and persons with a respiratory or cardiac condition (94%).

Sensitivity to Travellers' Needs – Eight percent (8%) of travellers with disabilities said that staff were not sensitive to their needs. The percentages and patterns of response follow that given in the previous paragraph.

Overall Satisfaction – The respondents who answered this question provided the same information as they did for the 2 previous questions, as 92% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied 'To a Moderate Extent' or greater with the way their needs were met during their trip.

4. OBSTACLES IDENTIFIED BY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

4.1 Persons with a Mobility Impairment

The 706 respondents with a mobility impairment form the largest group of respondents (63%) to share a common disability. They account for 226 of 252 respondents with disabilities who use a manual wheelchair and for 310 of 333 respondents with disabilities who use crutches, a walker or cane. Obstacles encountered by respondents using these two groups of aids therefore reflects the experience of respondents with a mobility impairment.

SEE TABLE 16 (p. 58)

Manual Wheelchairs – Of the 252 travellers who use a manual wheelchair, 194 of 240 asked for extra services to accommodate their needs. Two hundred (200) of 217 respondents (92%) using a manual wheelchair indicated that their booking agent was familiar with the services the carrier could provide to meet their needs. As well, 38 of 64 persons who use a manual wheelchair indicate they were not allowed to stow their aid in the cabin of the aircraft. Respondents using a manual wheelchair were among the most likely (64%) to request assistance to board an aircraft – which was provided to the satisfaction of 144 of 153 of these respondents (94%).

Crutches/Walker/Cane – Of the 333 travellers using crutches, a walker or cane, 173 requested extra services to accommodate their needs. Two hundred and thirteen (213) of 231 respondents who use crutches, a walker or cane (92%) indicated that the booking agent was familiar with the services the carrier could provide to meet their needs, which is less than the average (94%) for all respondents with disabilities. Over a third (35%) of these travellers were not allowed to stow their aid in the aircraft cabin. This group was also the most likely to have their mobility aids lost or damaged by the carrier (4%). This group was also the one most likely to experience difficulty (14%) to access the baggage retrieval area.

4.2 Persons with an Agility Impairment

The 86 respondents with an agility impairment were among the most likely (24 of 84 cases) to have booked their flight directly with the carrier. And they were more likely (15 of 58 respondents) than others to have encountered problems with the relay of information from the booking agent to check-in staff, and perhaps as a result, had 9 of 37 seating requests denied.

4.3 Persons with a Vision Impairment

While the needs of the 23 respondents who are blind were generally greater than those of the 103 respondents who have low vision, these 2 subgroups often indicated having similar types of needs and problems when travelling. The experience of the small subgroup of travellers with a vision impairment who used guide dogs (5) shows these travellers were more likely to encounter obstacles to their mobility than other respondents in the survey.

A significant proportion of travellers with a vision impairment experienced difficulties with airport accessibility. As may be expected, they experienced great difficulty with the written communication provided on flight monitors and through signs. Travellers with low vision also experienced serious difficulty in understanding announcements made through the public address system at airports (in 38% of cases) and in the aircraft (in 20% of cases). This may be linked to a hearing loss for persons with multiple disabilities.

Like all respondents with a disability, persons with a vision impairment found that boarding personnel were of greater assistance to them than personnel at the check-in counter and flight attendants. Respondents who are blind were among the most likely to get the seating they requested, such as the bulkhead seat. Persons who use a service animal, however, encountered a number of different problems with boarding, seating and in-flight assistance.

4.4 Persons with a Hearing Impairment

The 350 respondents who are hard of hearing and the subgroup of travellers who are deaf (37) showed similar trends in their travel experience. Overall, they identified fewer obstacles or problems than other respondents, because they were less likely to request special services. A high number of these respondents have multiple disabilities, which may explain why they indicated they had more difficulties than the average respondents in accessing not only audio communications at the airport, but also visual ones. They were also twice as likely as others to indicate that on-board announcements were not communicated clearly.

Taken as whole, these results confirm that both airport and in-flight communications remain problematic for persons with a visual and/or hearing impairment.

4.5 Persons with Other Disabilities

The profile of the respondents who indicated that they had a disability other than those listed in the survey was very diverse, and, as such, the responses to most questions for this subgroup followed the same pattern as that of all respondents.

The 10 respondents with learning disabilities required assistance at many stages of their trip and usually indicated that they were satisfied with the service they received. They nonetheless identified as problematic the relay of information between the booking agent and the check-in staff.

Respondents with a respiratory or cardiac condition (223) generally requested less assistance during their trip than other subgroups. A significant proportion (17%) found it difficult to proceed from the main entrance to the check-in counter at the airport. They were also the least likely among respondents to have their request for special seating on the aircraft honoured by the carrier.

5. ADULTS WITH TRANSPORTATION DISABILITIES

5.1 Transportation Disabilities by Type of Disability

It is common knowledge that the incidence of disabilities increases with age. A July 1995 study by Goss Gilroy Inc., entitled *Transportation and Disability in Canada: An Overview*, showed how the percentage of adults with transportation disabilities practically doubles from one cohort to the next:

- 15 to 34 (3.6%),
- 35 to 54 (7.3%),
- 55 to 64 (15.4%), and
- 65 and over (28.3%).

In 1995, some 3.8 million Canadians had a disability, including 2.2 million persons with transportation disabilities (who have a disability limiting their capacity to use transportation services). Of these, some 676,000 individuals were unable to use long distance transportation services because of health problems or conditions: 243,000 of these persons were restricted to their residence, an additional 353,000 could not take a short trip and a further 80,000 could not travel on long trips. Thus, 1.5 million adults with disabilities used one or more of the following long distance transportation services with more difficulty than other Canadian travellers:

- 715,000 persons with disabilities travelled by air;
- 519,000 persons with disabilities journeyed by intercity bus;
- 440,000 persons with disabilities used ferry services; and
- 168,000 persons with disabilities took a train.

5.2 Transportation Disabilities and Air Travel

The Goss Gilroy research thus established that, among these 1.5 million adults with transportation disabilities, 715,000 individuals used

air transportation services in 1995. These adults with transportation disabilities had the following disability-related characteristics[2]:

- 352,000 persons with a mobility impairment;
- 339,000 persons with an agility impairment;
- 74,000 persons with a hearing impairment;
- 227,000 persons with a vision impairment;
- 33,000 persons with a speech impairment; and
- 170,000 persons with other disabilities.

5.3 Concentrations of Adults with Disabilities

The Goss Gilroy study looked at the distribution of adults with transportation disabilities by province and the largest populations were found in Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta. These provinces accounted for 83.2% of all adults with transportation disabilities identified in the 1995 study. Five of the six airports covered in the Agency's Air Travel Accessibility Survey were in these four provinces and the sixth airport was in the province with the highest incidence of transportation disabilities, namely Nova Scotia, where 14.2% of the total adult population reports a transportation disability.

6. MAJOR FINDINGS

6.1 Scope of the Air Travel Accessibility Survey

The Air Travel Accessibility Survey identifies both the availability of certain services and equipment in the air transportation industry as well as the level of satisfaction of travellers with disabilities with these accommodations and facilities. It also identifies some obstacles encountered by Canadians with disabilities when they travel by air.

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[2]Figures do not add up because some individuals have multiple disabilities.

The survey presents a "snapshot" of the travel experience of 1,120 adults with disabilities in the summer of 2000. This sample is statistically valid and thus represents what all adults with disabilities would have experienced if they had taken an air trip at that time. The following points should however be kept in mind when assessing and analyzing the results of the survey:

- the study does not measure the level of accessibility of the air industry;
- numerous data is not conclusive (because of the low number of respondents) and do not support that conclusions be drawn;
- lastly, the study does not measure the level of expectation with regard to the provision of disability-related services and equipment to be provided.

The analysis of the survey results focusses mainly on the salient issues which are supported by the data. It addresses issues pertaining to the equipment and services provided to travellers with disabilities by airport operators and air carriers. The analysis also assesses the extent to which these findings impact on the general population of Canadian adults with transportation disabilities who travel by air.

The results of the survey provide a fairly positive and encouraging picture of the experience of persons with disabilities and seniors who travelled by aircraft over the summer of 2000. The results are somewhat surprising given that the survey period coincided with a very turbulent time of airline restructuring (the amalgamation of Canadi*n with Air Canada) and a peak travel period.

The disjunction between the survey results and the rise in concern about air services in general may stem from the fact that the study was designed to gather specific information on disability-related issues in air transportation which are directly linked to the Agency's accessibility regulations, codes of practice and reports. Still, comments from many respondents with disabilities raised the commonly heard complaints about long lineups and check-in times.

6.2 Major Findings Related to Service Providers

Regarding the availability of accessible air services and equipment required to be provided by Agency accessibility standards, the study established that carriers and airport operators did meet, most of the time, the needs of a great proportion of the travellers surveyed. The study also showed that there is room for improvements in many areas.

Given that the survey identified obstacles to the mobility of Canadians with disabilities using the federally-regulated air transportation network, the analysis focusses on main areas which need to be addressed in terms of accessibility.

A number of findings reflect issues raised in complaints filed with the Agency. In 1999, the most common complaints addressed service issues, carrier- and terminal-related communication issues, and aircraft seating – issues which were also among those most often raised in the survey. Even though all categories of travellers with disabilities reported obstacles in this regard, specific groups encountered communication- and service-related obstacles more than others.

For example, persons with sensory disabilities had major problems with airport and in-flight communications provided through audio and visual equipment. As well, persons with a visual impairment experienced the greatest difficulty in accessing all areas of the airport. The prevalence of service issues can be explained by the number of respondents with a mobility impairment, many of which used a mobility aid.

Perhaps as a result of communication problems, the most common obstacle in terms of accessible equipment was related to the non-provision of requested seating accommodation. In fact, few respondents identified other significant obstacles with respect to carrier equipment. Since seating is often the object of complaints to the Agency, compliance with the regulatory requirement that accessible seats should be the last to be assigned to passengers who do not have

disabilities appears to continue to pose challenges to carriers. This issue relates more to personnel training than to accessible equipment.

6.3 Linking the User Survey to the Goss Gilroy Study

As previously mentioned, the survey results are generally very encouraging in terms of adults with disabilities who travel by air in Canada without encountering obstacles to their mobility. A proportion of travellers with disabilities, however, still face difficult situations during their journey. Their impact on the population of 715,000 adults with transportation disabilities who used air services in 1995 (see Goss Gilroy study, section 5 above) will be assessed.

The Air Travel Accessibility Survey provides a statistically valid sample of the population of persons with disabilities who travelled by air in the summer of 2000. The proportion (%) of respondents in the User Survey will therefore be converted to adults with transportation disabilities based on the Goss Gilroy study. Thus, 1% of all respondents with disabilities in the Agency survey represents 7,150 adults with transportation disabilities. (The 1995 study projected the target population would grow by 11% by the year 2000. Nonetheless, the figures for 1995 will be used, for they are more complete.) Extrapolated numbers will appear in parentheses.

6.4 Implication of the Results for Air Carriers

The following examples address issues relevant to air carriers. Percentages were rounded to the first decimal and the numbers were rounded to the hundreds of units. The results represent the total number of adults with transportation disabilities who use air services in a year.

Reason for Limiting Travel – Respondents in the Agency survey said they did not travel more often for the following reasons:

- 5.9% (or 42,200 adults with transportation disabilities) said they experienced "anxiety about being able to have needs met";
- 2.7% (or 19,300) said it was due to inadequate services in the past;
- 0.9% (or 6,400) quoted inadequate equipment in the past; and
- 35.5% (or 253,800) do not travel more because it is too expensive.

Booking – At booking, 43.8% (or 313,200) of respondents requested extra services to accommodate their needs, broken down as follows:

• travellers with a mobility impairment	56.9% (or 200,300)
• travellers with an agility impairment	58.5% (or 198,300)
• travellers with a vision impairment	55.8% (or 126,700)
• travellers with a hearing impairment	34.7% (or 25,700)
• travellers with other impairments	43.8% (or 88,900)

Check-in – Respondents assessed their experience at the check-in counter:

- 18.6% (or 133,000) said their request for extra services had not been passed on adequately from the booking agent to the check-in staff;
- 7.8% (or 55,800) felt that the check-in staff were not sufficiently familiar with services the carrier can provide to meet their needs; and
- 9.4% (or 67,200) said help at check-in did not meet their needs.

The first and last elements could point to operational inadequacies and the second one, to lapses in the training of carrier personnel.

Boarding – The following assistance was requested at boarding:

• to proceed to the boarding area	43.7% (or 312,500)
• to enplane	33.3% (or 238,100)

- to stow and retrieve baggage 31.9% (or 228,100)
- other 4.5% (or 32,200)

Seating Requests – Seating accommodation was requested by 24.4% (or 174,500) of respondents as follows:

- more leg room 49.4% (or 86,200)
- closer to the entrance 38.2% (or 66,700)
- closer to a washroom 27.0% (or 47,100)
- movable armrest 9.9% (or 17,300)
- other (unspecified) 64.4% (or 112,400)

Only one third of respondents who made a seating request indicated if it had been provided or not. The most critical accommodation is a movable armrest because passengers who need them may not be able to transfer to a passenger seat in their absence and, therefore, would be denied boarding.

In-flight Services – On-board announcements were not clearly communicated to 15.0% (or 107,300) of respondents. Also, the following types of assistance were requested from flight attendants by respondents:

- moving to and from the washroom 5.6% (or 40,000)
- help with meals 3.6% (or 25,700)
- description of features and their location 3.4% (or 24,300)

De-boarding Assistance – When leaving the aircraft, respondents asked for assistance to proceed:

- to the public area of the airport 44.4% (or 317,500)
- to a representative of another carrier 15.1% (or 108,000)

Overall Appreciation – Respondents to the survey were asked three questions on their overall experience with the services provided by air carriers during their trip: the extent to which their right to determine

their need for extra services had been respected; the extent to which staff had been sensitive to their needs; and the extent of their satisfaction with the degree to which their needs were met during their trip.

Answers to all three questions were practically identical: 92.2% (or 659,000 adults with transportation disabilities) responded to all three questions positively. This is very encouraging. On the other hand, it also means that 56,000 adults with transportation disabilities felt the airlines had not done an adequate job of satisfying their needs when they travelled.

6.5 Implication of the Results for Airport Operators

The following examples address issues relating to the airport where respondents were given the questionnaire. This analysis looks at the aggregate results and not at those specific to given airports. Percentages are still rounded to the first decimal and the numbers, to the tens of units. Again, the results represent the total number of adults with transportation disabilities who use air services in a year.

Airport Entrance – Respondents indicated the level of difficulty, if any, they experienced to get from the airport's main entrance to the carrier's check-in counter: 12.4% (or 88,700 adults with transportation disabilities) found this difficult and 626,300 experienced no major difficulties with the task.

Airport Communications – Respondents also reported on the extent to which information was clearly communicated to them through:

- signage – the most accessible, as 93.6% (or 669,200) of respondents said it was easy to read (and some 45,800 said it was not);
- flight information monitors – the next most accessible, for 88.2% (or 630,600) of respondents (but not for 84,400); and

- public address system – the least accessible communication tool at airports, as 31.6% (or 225,900) of respondents did not understand announcements made through them.

Public Areas at Airports – In general, areas most difficult to access were the Help Desk and baggage retrieval area:

- Help Desk 15.0% (or 107,300)
- Baggage Retrieval area 13.7% (or 98,000)

Ground Transportation – With regard to accessible ground transportation when leaving the airport, 46.1% (or 330,050) of respondents required an accessible taxi, shuttle, city bus, or other transportation (probably a private vehicle). The degree of accessibility of ground transportation was assessed as follows: 52 of 410 respondents, or 41,860 adults with transportation disabilities (12.7% of 330,050), said it was not adequate to meet their needs.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 Analysis

The air travel industry has made great strides and progress over the last decade in providing transportation services which are increasingly accessible to all Canadians, including persons with disabilities. The survey results confirm this for the issues it addressed and the industry should be commended for this achievement.

Additional efforts, nonetheless, are required to remove the remaining obstacles identified in this report, thus ensuring greater mobility for Canadians with disabilities who travel by air. This will become increasingly important, as the Canadian population will be aging rapidly in the years to come.

Based on this study's findings and on the convergence of data, priorities for action should focus on the relay of information to and by

carriers, on the greater accessibility of communication equipment as well as of the Help Desk and baggage retrieval area at airports, on the improved provision of accessible seating on aircraft as well as on greater accessibility to ground transportation. Finally, the provision of service animal relief areas at airports also needs to be considered.

The relay of information, where pertinent, and better seating accommodation on aircraft are basically operational and training issues which carriers should address because of the impact these have on the travel experience of the entire travelling population, including persons with disabilities. The survey also points to the need for improved training for the provision of other disability-related services – like assistance at boarding and de-boarding, inquiring about a passenger's needs, and services related to mobility aids. Many irritating obstacles identified by respondents with disabilities relate to issues raised in complaints to the Agency and could be eliminated by providing carrier staff with adequate training.

Numerous aspects of airport equipment and services pose serious difficulty to persons with disabilities when they travel by air. Communication is most problematic for public address systems. Given the size and poor acoustics of most airports, it is conceivable that audio announcements cannot be improved enough to meet the needs of travellers with disabilities and that they should be supplemented with visual communications. A study of such systems may be needed in order to set a viable course of action.

The issue of flight information monitors is much easier to resolve and it was properly addressed in the Agency's 1997 report "Communication Barriers – A Look at Barriers to Communication Facing Persons with Disabilities Who Travel by Air" concerning the placement of the monitors at eye level and screen parameters, such as colour contrast and the use of large print or of an audio-echo technology. The relevant recommendation should be implemented at all major airports.

Another communication barrier at airports is the lack of TTYs or similar technology. In an era where state-of-the-art communication tools are systematically made available to Canadians when they travel, it is inconceivable that persons who are deaf or hard of hearing lack access to basic telephone services, regardless of the number of users and of the frequency of use. These findings support the remedies proposed in the Code of Practice on the Communication of Information currently being developed by the Agency.

Greater accessibility of the Help Desk should be addressed not only in terms of adequate signage and communications, but also in terms of its location, layout and characteristics. Given the size and configuration of major airports, where a staffed Help Desk cannot be positioned near all entrances to the terminal(s), the Help Desk should be supplemented by easily recognizable roving personnel (staff or volunteers) to provide information or assistance to persons with disabilities and other travellers on an ad hoc basis. Accessibility of the baggage retrieval area also proved problematic to persons with disabilities at most airports surveyed. The nature of the problem needs to be assessed and corrective measures taken.

Airport operators should work with local and/or national organizations of and for persons with disabilities in addressing all of these issues.

The issue of the accessibility of ground transportation services at airports may require additional research, something the Agency first needs to determine. The Canadian Council of Airports should be consulted and involved in this process and with the issue of the provision of dog relief areas. The latter would appear to be more of an operational issue than anything else, given that very little, if any, infrastructure is needed to this end.

7.2 Lessons Learned

In view of the above, lessons learned are as follows:

- Carriers need to address a number of operational issues such as the relay of information and seating accommodations.

- Carriers need to assess, review and improve disability-related training of their staff and agents .

- Airport operators need to improve communications in airports, including public address announcements and the availability of TTYs or their equivalent.

- The Canadian Transportation Agency, in collaboration with the industry and the community of persons with disabilities, needs to establish accessibility standards for airport operations and equipment, including ground transportation.

- The Canadian Transportation Agency and the industry need to establish a partnership to better inform the community of persons with disabilities of the accessible equipment, accommodations and services made available to them.

APPENDIX 1

TABLES

Airport	Surveys Distributed	Surveys Received	Response Rate
Halifax International Airport	510	227	44.5%
Dorval International Airport	571	204	35.7%
Ottawa International Airport	517	264	51.1%
Toronto Pearson Int'l Airport	1028	403	39.2%
Calgary International Airport	766	292	38.1%
Vancouver Int'l Airport	839	326	38.9%
Total (all airports)	4231	1716	40.6%

TABLE 1

Sample	Sample Size (n)	Sample Error
All respondents	1716	+/- 2,4%
Sample from respondents 65 and older	1301	+/- 2,7%
Sample from respondents 65 and older with a disability	849	+/- 3,4%
Sample from respondents with a disability	1120	+/- 2,9%

TABLE 2

Type of disability	All respondents			Respondents with a disability *		
	#	n	%	#	n	%
Mobility impairment	706	1716	41%	706	1120	63%
Agility impairment	86	1716	5%	86	1120	8%
Blind	23	1716	1%	23	1120	2%
Low vision	103	1716	6%	103	1120	9%
Deaf	37	1716	2%	37	1120	3%
Hard of hearing	350	1716	20%	350	1120	31%
Learning disability	10	1716	1%	10	1120	1%
Respiratory / Cardiac condition	223	1716	13%	223	1120	20%
Other	133	1716	8%	133	1120	12%
None	596	1716	35%	0	1120	0%

Some respondents identified two or more disabilities.

TABLE 3

Type of devices or aids	All respondents			Respondents with a disability *		
	#	n	%	#	n	%
Scooter	35	1716	2%	35	1120	3%
Manual wheelchair	259	1716	15%	252	1120	23%
Power wheelchair	9	1716	1%	9	1120	1%
Crutches / walker / cane	338	1716	20%	333	1120	30%
Brace / prosthetic	30	1716	2%	30	1120	3%
Optical device (other than glasses)	12	1716	1%	12	1120	1%
White cane	23	1716	1%	23	1120	2%
Service animal	8	1716	0%	8	1120	1%
Hearing devices	207	1716	12%	200	1120	18%
Other	63	1716	4%	39	1120	3%
None	846	1716	49%	310	1120	28%

Some respondents with disabilities used more than one aid or device.

TABLE 4

Communication tools		Respondents with a disability															
		Ottawa		Halifax		Calgary		Vancouver		Toronto		Montreal		All Airports			
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Flight information monitors easy to read	Not at all	1	1%	4	3%	10	6%	6	3%	16	7%	4	4%	41	4%		
	To a small extent	5	4%	7	6%	11	7%	14	6%	23	11%	7	7%	67	7%		
	To a moderate extent	26	19%	33	28%	31	19%	38	22%	52	24%	22	22%	203	22%		
	To a large extent	43	31%	34	29%	57	35%	69	38%	78	34%	32	32%	310	34%		
	Entirely	63	46%	40	34%	52	32%	53	29%	52	24%	34	34%	294	32%		
	Total	138	100%	118	100%	161	100%	181	100%	218	100%	99	100%	915	100%		
Public address announcements easy to understand	Not at all	10	7%	14	12%	20	11%	21	10%	24	11%	10	9%	99	10%		
	To a small extent	32	22%	20	17%	39	22%	48	23%	59	26%	15	14%	213	22%		
	To a moderate extent	47	32%	39	33%	45	26%	61	29%	66	29%	34	31%	292	30%		
	To a large extent	32	22%	30	25%	38	22%	48	23%	53	23%	33	30%	234	24%		
	Entirely	24	17%	17	14%	34	19%	31	15%	24	11%	19	17%	149	15%		
	Total	145	100%	120	100%	176	100%	209	100%	226	100%	111	100%	987	100%		
Signage easy to read	Not at all	0	0%	5	4%	6	3%	2	1%	9	4%	3	3%	25	2%		
	To a small extent	5	3%	1	1%	6	3%	13	6%	12	5%	5	5%	42	4%		
	To a moderate extent	26	17%	28	21%	21	11%	35	16%	52	21%	22	20%	184	18%		
	To a large extent	55	35%	51	39%	71	39%	93	43%	97	40%	34	31%	401	39%		
	Entirely	70	45%	46	35%	80	43%	75	34%	73	30%	45	41%	389	37%		
	Total	156	100%	131	100%	184	100%	218	100%	243	100%	109	100%	1041	100%		

TABLE 5

Communication tools		Respondents with a disability													
		Ottawa		Halifax		Calgary		Vancouver		Toronto		Montreal		All Airports	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Flight information monitors easy to read	Not at all	1	1%	4	3%	10	6%	6	3%	16	7%	4	4%	41	4%
	To a small extent	5	4%	7	6%	11	7%	14	8%	23	11%	7	7%	67	7%
	To a moderate extent	26	19%	33	28%	31	19%	39	22%	52	24%	22	22%	203	22%
	To a large extent	43	31%	34	29%	57	35%	69	38%	75	34%	32	32%	310	34%
	Entirely	63	46%	40	34%	52	32%	53	29%	52	24%	34	34%	294	32%
	Total	138	100%	118	100%	161	100%	181	100%	218	100%	99	100%	915	100%
Public address announcements easy to understand	Not at all	10	7%	14	12%	20	11%	21	10%	24	11%	10	9%	99	10%
	To a small extent	32	22%	20	17%	39	22%	48	23%	59	26%	15	14%	213	22%
	To a moderate extent	47	32%	39	33%	45	26%	61	29%	66	29%	34	31%	292	30%
	To a large extent	32	22%	30	25%	38	22%	48	23%	53	23%	33	30%	234	24%
	Entirely	24	17%	17	14%	34	19%	31	15%	24	11%	19	17%	149	15%
	Total	145	100%	120	100%	176	100%	209	100%	226	100%	111	100%	987	100%
Signage easy to read	Not at all	0	0%	5	4%	6	3%	2	1%	9	4%	3	3%	25	2%
	To a small extent	5	3%	1	1%	6	3%	13	6%	12	5%	5	5%	42	4%
	To a moderate extent	26	17%	28	21%	21	11%	35	16%	52	21%	22	20%	184	18%
	To a large extent	55	35%	51	39%	71	39%	93	43%	97	40%	34	31%	401	39%
	Entirely	70	45%	46	35%	80	43%	75	34%	73	30%	45	41%	389	37%
	Total	156	100%	131	100%	184	100%	218	100%	243	100%	109	100%	1041	100%

TABLE 5

Ease of access		Respondents with a disability													
		Halifax		Montreal		Ottawa		Toronto		Calgary		Vancouver		All Airports	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Baggage Retrieval	Not at all	6	5%	6	6%	4	3%	14	6%	9	6%	7	4%	46	5%
	To a small extent	7	6%	11	12%	8	6%	24	11%	9	6%	19	10%	78	9%
	To a moderate extent	26	22%	31	33%	35	24%	56	26%	36	23%	37	20%	221	24%
	To a large extent	29	25%	22	23%	40	28%	70	32%	46	30%	64	35%	271	30%
	Entirely	49	42%	25	26%	57	40%	54	25%	55	35%	54	30%	294	32%
	Total	117	100%	95	100%	144	100%	218	100%	155	100%	181	100%	910	100%
Dining Areas	Not at all	3	4%	0	0%	1	1%	4	3%	3	3%	2	2%	13	2%
	To a small extent	4	5%	1	2%	4	4%	11	9%	4	4%	1	1%	25	4%
	To a moderate extent	13	17%	20	30%	11	11%	30	23%	26	27%	26	21%	126	21%
	To a large extent	21	27%	20	30%	35	36%	42	33%	27	28%	54	44%	199	33%
	Entirely	37	47%	25	38%	46	47%	41	32%	37	38%	41	33%	227	38%
	Total	78	100%	66	100%	97	100%	128	100%	97	100%	124	100%	590	100%
Shops	Not at all	2	2%	2	3%	2	2%	6	5%	2	2%	2	2%	16	3%
	To a small extent	5	6%	4	5%	2	2%	5	4%	2	2%	5	4%	23	4%
	To a moderate extent	9	11%	19	25%	10	10%	22	18%	13	14%	20	17%	93	16%
	To a large extent	32	40%	26	34%	34	35%	40	34%	32	33%	51	43%	215	37%
	Entirely	33	41%	25	33%	49	51%	46	39%	47	49%	40	34%	240	41%
	Total	81	100%	76	100%	97	100%	119	100%	96	100%	118	100%	587	100%
Washrooms	Not at all	4	3%	1	1%	3	2%	2	1%	8	3%	4	2%	19	2%
	To a small extent	4	3%	6	6%	8	4%	13	6%	2	1%	10	5%	30	4%
	To a moderate extent	17	14%	21	21%	17	12%	28	13%	16	10%	25	13%	124	14%
	To a large extent	36	31%	32	33%	44	32%	91	43%	59	38%	81	42%	343	37%
	Entirely	57	48%	38	39%	69	50%	80	37%	73	47%	73	38%	390	43%
	Total	118	100%	98	100%	138	100%	214	100%	158	100%	193	100%	916	100%
Help Desk	Not at all	2	2%	5	6%	5	6%	15	9%	5	5%	5	4%	37	6%
	To a small extent	3	4%	8	10%	7	8%	20	13%	10	10%	11	8%	59	9%
	To a moderate extent	10	12%	19	24%	10	11%	29	18%	6	6%	26	19%	100	16%
	To a large extent	27	33%	25	32%	25	29%	49	31%	27	28%	51	38%	204	32%
	Entirely	41	49%	21	27%	40	46%	45	28%	50	51%	43	32%	240	38%
	Total	83	100%	78	100%	87	100%	158	100%	98	100%	136	100%	640	100%

TABLE 6

Ease of access		Respondents with a disability											
		Halifax		Montreal		Ottawa		Toronto		Calgary		Vancouver		All Airports	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Baggage Retrieval	Not at all	6	5%	6	6%	4	3%	14	6%	9	6%	7	4%	46	5%
	To a small extent	7	6%	11	12%	8	6%	24	11%	9	6%	19	10%	78	9%
	To a moderate extent	26	22%	31	33%	38	26%	56	26%	36	23%	37	20%	221	24%
	To a large extent	29	25%	22	23%	48	33%	70	32%	46	30%	64	35%	271	30%
	Entirely	49	42%	25	26%	57	40%	54	25%	56	36%	54	30%	294	32%
	Total	117	100%	95	100%	144	100%	218	100%	156	100%	181	100%	910	100%
Dining Areas	Not at all	3	4%	0	0%	1	1%	4	3%	3	3%	2	2%	13	2%
	To a small extent	4	5%	1	2%	4	4%	11	9%	4	4%	1	1%	25	4%
	To a moderate extent	13	17%	20	30%	11	11%	30	23%	26	27%	26	21%	126	21%
	To a large extent	21	27%	20	30%	35	36%	42	33%	27	28%	54	44%	199	34%
	Entirely	37	47%	25	38%	46	47%	41	32%	37	38%	41	33%	227	38%
	Total	78	100%	66	100%	97	100%	128	100%	97	100%	124	100%	590	100%
Shops	Not at all	2	2%	2	3%	2	2%	6	5%	2	2%	2	2%	16	3%
	To a small extent	5	6%	4	5%	2	2%	5	4%	2	2%	5	4%	23	4%
	To a moderate extent	9	11%	19	25%	10	10%	22	18%	13	14%	20	17%	93	16%
	To a large extent	32	40%	26	34%	34	35%	40	34%	32	33%	81	43%	215	37%
	Entirely	33	41%	25	33%	49	51%	46	39%	47	49%	80	34%	240	41%
	Total	81	100%	76	100%	97	100%	119	100%	96	100%	118	100%	587	100%
Washrooms	Not at all	4	3%	1	1%	3	2%	2	1%	5	3%	4	2%	19	2%
	To a small extent	4	3%	6	6%	5	4%	13	6%	2	1%	10	5%	40	4%
	To a moderate extent	17	14%	21	21%	17	12%	28	13%	16	10%	25	13%	124	14%
	To a large extent	36	31%	32	33%	44	32%	91	43%	59	38%	81	42%	343	37%
	Entirely	57	48%	38	39%	69	50%	80	37%	73	47%	73	38%	390	43%
	Total	118	100%	98	100%	138	100%	214	100%	155	100%	193	100%	916	100%
Help Desk	Not at all	2	2%	5	6%	5	6%	18	9%	5	5%	5	4%	37	6%
	To a small extent	3	4%	8	10%	7	8%	28	13%	10	10%	11	8%	59	9%
	To a moderate extent	10	12%	19	24%	10	11%	29	18%	6	6%	26	19%	100	16%
	To a large extent	27	33%	25	32%	25	29%	49	31%	27	28%	51	38%	204	32%
	Entirely	41	49%	21	27%	40	46%	45	28%	50	51%	43	32%	240	38%
	Total	63	100%	78	100%	87	100%	158	100%	98	100%	136	100%	640	100%

TABLE 6

Assistance Required	Respondents with a Disability		
	#	n	%
To proceed to the boarding area	489	1120	44%
To board the plane	373	1120	33%
To stow and retrieve baggage	357	1120	32%
Other	50	1120	4%

Some respondents required assistance with more than one activity.

TABLE 7

Seating accommodation requested	Respondents with a disability		
	#	n	%
No	847	1120	76%
Yes	273	1120	24%

TABLE 8

Seating features	Respondents with a disability					
	Requested			Provided		
	#	n	%	#	n*	%
Movable arm rest	19	191	10%	13	17	76%
More leg room	118	239	49%	72	107	67%
Closer to entrance	81	212	38%	49	70	70%
Closer to washroom	54	200	27%	40	49	82%
Other	132	205	64%	81	93	87%

**** A number of respondents who requested the accommodation did not indicate if it was provided or not.***

TABLE 9

Accessibility features available	Tactile row markers			On-board wheelchair			Accessible washroom			Washroom features		
	#	n	%	#	n	%	#	n	%	#	n	%
Yes	135	909	15%	46	921	5%	19	915	2%	119	915	13%
No	65	909	7%	111	921	12%	110	915	12%	89	915	10%
Don't know	709	909	78%	764	921	83%	786	915	86%	707	915	77%

TABLE 10

Accessibility features	Tactile row markers			On-board wheelchair			Accessible washroom			Washroom features		
met needs	#	n	%	#	n	%	#	n	%	#	n	%
Not at all	9	94	10%	2	35	6%	1	15	7%	3	98	3%
To a small extent	2	94	2%	0	35	0%	0	15	0%	0	98	0%
To a moderate extent	12	94	13%	3	35	9%	5	15	33%	11	98	11%
To a large extent	28	94	30%	13	35	37%	2	15	13%	35	98	36%
Entirely	43	94	46%	17	35	49%	7	15	47%	49	98	50%

TABLE 11

Assistance required	Respondents with a disability		
	#	n	%
To proceed to public area of airport	431	971	44%
To proceed to representative of another air carrier	124	820	15%

TABLE 12

Accessible ground transportation required	Respondents with a disability		
	#	n	%
Accessible taxi	145	1120	13%
Accesible city bus	23	1120	2%
Accessible shuttle	139	1120	12%
Other transportation	210	1120	19%

TABLE 13

Alternative formats	Requested			Provided		
	#	n	%	#	n	%
Confirmation of flight services	8	125	6%	6	8	75%
Travel itinerary	8	125	6%	7	8	88%
Description of airports you would use	3	125	2%	2	3	67%
On-board briefing card	5	125	4%	4	5	80%
Other	0	125	0%	0	0	0%

TABLE 14

Mobility aids carried free of charge	Yes		
	#	n	%
Total respondents	245	253	97%
Scooter	16	16	100%
Manual wheelchair	143	148	97%
Power wheelchair	6	6	100%
Crutches/walker/cane	143	147	97%

Some respondents used more than one mobility aid.

TABLE 15

Type of devices or aids	All respondents with disabilities*	Respondents with a mobility impairment*
	#	#
Scooter	35	29
Manual wheelchair	252	226
Power wheelchair	9	9
Crutches / walker / cane	333	310
Brace / prosthetic	30	27
Optical device (excluding glasses)	12	7
White cane	23	6
Service animal	8	1
Hearing devices	200	87
Other	39	22
None	310	137

*Some respondents with disabilities used more than one aid or device.

TABLE 16

APPENDIX 2

AIR TRAVEL SURVEY FOR SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Dear Traveller,

The Canadian Transportation Agency (the Agency) is the federal government agency responsible for ensuring that air, rail and ferry transportation in Canada are accessible to all travellers. We are conducting a survey of seniors and persons with disabilities to learn more about the services that made their air travel easier and about the obstacles that they may have faced when travelling.

Information from this survey will be used to help us establish priorities for our work to improve access to transportation. The questionnaire is designed to be filled out during your trip or shortly after. It contains questions on all stages of your air travel experience. Your input is critical to our work to remove obstacles to air travel in Canada and will be greatly appreciated.

To participate in the survey, please fill out the questionnaire and mail it to the Agency using the postage-paid envelope provided. If you have any questions about the survey or if you would like to participate in the survey by telephone, please call us at 1-800-883-1813 (or by TTY at 1-800-669-5575). Participation is voluntary and all responses and personal information will remain confidential.

For additional information about the Agency, please visit our website at www.cta-otc.gc.ca.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY

Here are examples of the types of questions you will find in the questionnaire:

Example 1

Some questions require that you choose a category. For these items, please check the box near the category that best fits your answer. In each question, indicate only one answer unless specified otherwise.

For example;

How frequently do you travel by plane?

More than 12 trips per year..... ❑
From 5 to 12 trips per year ..... ❑
From 2 to 4 trips per year ..... ❑
1 trip per year or less ..... ❑

Example 2

Depending on your answers, some questions may not apply to you. For instance, in the following example, you are directed to the appropriate question depending on your answer.

Did you request information on the airports you would be using?

Yes ❑ --> **SKIP TO Q. 12**
No ❑

If there is no instruction to skip questions, please go to the next question.

Example 3

Some questions are posed on a 5-point scale in which you are asked to rate the strength of your answer. For these questions, please circle or indicate the number corresponding to the answer that best fits your response. For example:

To what extent did the information provided meet your needs?

NOT AT ALL	TO A SMALL EXTENT	TO A MODERATE EXTENT	TO A LARGE EXTENT	ENTIRELY	DON'T KNOW	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	❑	❑

Please try to respond to every question, but if you really do not know the answer, check the box under "don't know". If a question does not apply to you, please check the box under "N/A", for "not applicable".

User Survey on the Accessibility of Air Travel in Canada

1. Do you have any of the following disabilities or health conditions? (check all that apply)

- Mobility impairment (difficulty walking) ☐
- Agility impairment (difficulty using hands or arms) ☐
- Blind ☐
- Low vision ☐
- Deaf ☐
- Hard of hearing ☐
- Learning disability ☐
- Respiratory/Cardiac condition ☐
- Other (please specify) _____ ☐
- None ☐

2. Do you use any of the following devices or aids when travelling? (check all that apply)

- Scooter ☐
- Manual wheelchair ☐
- Power wheelchair ☐
- Crutches/walker/cane ☐
- Brace/prosthetic ☐
- Optical device (other than glasses or contact lenses) ☐
- White cane ☐
- Service animal ☐
- Hearing devices... ☐
- Other (please specify) _____ ☐
- None ☐

3. How frequently do you travel by plane:

- More than 12 trips per year ☐
- From 5 to 12 trips per year ☐
- From 2 to 4 trips per year ☐
- 1 trip per year or less ☐

4. Which of the following is the *main* reason you do not travel more often?
(Please check *one* response)

- No need for more trips ☐
- Too expensive ☐
- Anxiety about being able to have needs met ☐
- Inadequate equipment available in the past ☐
- Inadequate service in the past ☐
- Other (please specify) _____ ☐

THIS TRIP

5. Date of departure from your home airport:
_____

6. Starting from: City/Airport _____ Country _____

7. Stop(s) which involved a change of plane, if any:
City/Airport _____ Country _____

City/Airport _____ Country _____

8. Destination: City/Airport _____ Country _____

9. Date of return: _____

10. On which size of plane did you travel on this trip? (check all that apply)

- Small — under 30 seats (e.g., Metroliner, Beechcraft,) ☐
- Medium — 30 to 100 seats (e.g., Dash8, Bae146) ☐
- Large — over 100 seats (e.g., Boeing 737, 747, Airbus A320or 330, Lockheed L1011). ☐
- Don't know ☐

11. During this trip, did you require the assistance of an attendant or other personal assistant: No ☐ Yes ☐

12. Purpose of this trip:

- Business ❑
- Visiting Family/Friends ❑
- Vacation ❑
- Medical Appointment ❑
- Other (please specify)_____ ❑

BOOKINGS

13. How did you book your trip?

- Through a travel agent ❑
- Directly with the carrier ❑
- Other (please specify)_____ ❑
- Don't Know ❑

14. Did you identify yourself to the booking agent as a person with a disability? No ❑ Yes ❑ N/A ❑

15. When booking, did you request that the air carrier provide extra services to accommodate your needs? No ❑ Yes ❑ N/A ❑

16. To what extent did you feel that the booking agent was familiar with the services the air carrier could provide to accommodate your needs?

Not at All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	❑

INFORMATION ON THE AIRPORT WHERE YOU RECEIVED YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE

17. To what extent was it easy for you to get from the main entrance of the airport to the air carrier's check-in counter?

Not at All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	❑

18. To what extent were flight information monitors easy to read?

Not at All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely	Don't Know	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	❑	❑

19. To what extent were the public address announcements easy to understand?

Not at All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely	Don't Know	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	❑	❑

20. To what extent were the signs (for gates, telephones, washrooms, etc.) in the terminal easy to read?

Not at All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely	Don't Know	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	❑	❑

21. To what extent was it easy for you to access the following areas of the airport?

	Not At All	To a small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely	N/A
Baggage Retrieval Area	1	2	3	4	5	❑
Dining Areas	1	2	3	4	5	❑
Shops	1	2	3	4	5	❑
Washrooms	1	2	3	4	5	❑
Help Desk	1	2	3	4	5	❑

CHECK-IN

22. If you had identified special requirements when booking, to what extent had this information been passed on to the check-in personnel?

NOT AT ALL	TO A SMALL EXTENT	TO A MODERATE EXTENT	TO A LARGE EXTENT	ENTIRELY	DON'T KNOW	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	❑	❑

23. To what extent did you feel the check-in personnel were familiar with the services the air carrier could provide to meet your needs?

NOT AT ALL	TO A SMALL EXTENT	TO A MODERATE EXTENT	TO A LARGE EXTENT	ENTIRELY	DON'T KNOW	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	❑	❑

24. To what extent did you feel the assistance provided at check-in met your needs?

NOT AT ALL	TO A SMALL EXTENT	TO A MODERATE EXTENT	TO A LARGE EXTENT	ENTIRELY	DON'T KNOW	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	❑	❑

BOARDING

25. **a.** Did you require assistance with the following activities:

b. If yes, to what extent did the assistance provided meet your needs?

	NO	YES	NOT AT ALL	TO A SMALL EXTENT	TO A MODERATE EXTENT	TO A LARGE EXTENT	ENTIRELY
Proceeding to the boarding area	❑	❑	1	2	3	4	5
Boarding the plane	❑	❑	1	2	3	4	5
Stowing and retrieving baggage.	❑	❑	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify)_____	❑	❑	1	2	3	4	5

_____

26. To what extent did you feel the boarding personnel were familiar with the procedures for assisting you when boarding the plane?

Not at All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely	Don't Know	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	☐	☐

Seating Arrangements

27. Did you request a particular seat to accommodate your needs? No ☐ -> Skip to Q.29 Yes ☐

28. Did you request any of the following seating features:

	a.	b. If yes, was it provided?
Movable arm rest.....	No ☐ Yes ☐	No ☐ Yes ☐
More leg room	No ☐ Yes ☐	No ☐ Yes ☐
Seat closer to the entrance	No ☐ Yes ☐	No ☐ Yes ☐
Seat closer to the restroom.....	No ☐ Yes ☐	No ☐ Yes ☐
Other (please specify)_____	No ☐ Yes ☐	No ☐ Yes ☐

_____

During the Flight

29. To what extent were on-board announcements communicated clearly to you?

Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely
1	2	3	4	5

30. a. Did you request any of the following types of assistance from the flight attendant(s):

b. If yes, to what extent did the assistance provided meet your needs?

	No	Yes	Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely
A description of features of the plane and their locations.....	☐	☐	1	2	3	4	5
Moving to and from the washroom on the plane.....	☐	☐	1	2	3	4	5
Help with meals (i.e. cutting or identifying contents).....	☐	☐	1	2	3	4	5

31. Did the carrier staff inquire about your needs during the flight? No ☐ Yes ☐ N/A ☐

32. To what extent did you feel the assistance provided by the flight attendant(s) met your needs during the flight?

Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely
1	2	3	4	5

EQUIPMENT

33. a. Did the plane have any of the following accessibility features?

b. If yes, to what extent did these features meet your needs?

	Don't Know	No	Yes	Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely
Tactile row markers	❑	❑	❑	1	2	3	4	5
On-board wheelchair	❑	❑	❑	1	2	3	4	5
Washroom accessible by on-board wheelchair.....	❑	❑	❑	1	2	3	4	5
Accessibility features that you require in the cabin washrooms..	❑	❑	❑	1	2	3	4	5

34. If the accessibility equipment or features you required were not provided, on what size of plane were you travelling?

- Small — under 30 seats..... ❑
- Medium — 30 to 100 seats ..... ❑
- Large — over 100 seats ..... ❑
- Don't know..... ❑
- Not Applicable..... ❑

LEAVING THE AIRCRAFT

35. a. Did you require assistance when proceeding to:

b. If yes, to what extent did the assistance provide meet your needs?

	No	Yes	Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely
The public area of the airport.....	❑	❑	1	2	3	4	5
A representative of another air carrier	❑	❑	1	2	3	4	5

GROUND TRANSPORTATION

36. a. Did you require the following services at Canadian airports?

b. If yes, to what extent did the services provided meet your needs?

	No	Yes	Not At All	To a small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely
An accessible taxi.....	❑	❑	1	2	3	4	5
An accessible city bus....	❑	❑	1	2	3	4	5
An accessible shuttle bus .	❑	❑	1	2	3	4	5
Other transportation	❑	❑	1	2	3	4	5

(Please specify)_____

SERVICE ANIMALS

If not applicable, skip to Question 40.

37. a. Was your service animal permitted to remain on the floor at your seat on the plane? No ❑ Yes ❑

b. If yes, to what extent was there enough floor space for your service animal ?

Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely
1	2	3	4	5

38. To what extent was it easy for you to access a relief area for your dog when necessary at the airport terminals in Canada?

Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely	Don't Know	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	❑	❑

39. Overall, to what extent were your needs met when travelling by plane with your service animal?

Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely
1	2	3	4	5

Alternative Formats (Braille, Large Print, Cassette)

If not applicable, skip to Question 42.

40. a. Did you request any of the following information in an alternative format:

b. If yes, did you receive the information in an alternative format of your choice?

Confirmation of flight services	No ❑ Yes ❑		No ❑	Yes ❑
Travel itinerary	No ❑ Yes ❑		No ❑	Yes ❑
Description of airports you would use	No ❑ Yes ❑		No ❑	Yes ❑
On-board briefing card	No ❑ Yes ❑		No ❑	Yes ❑
Other (please specify)_____	No ❑ Yes ❑		No ❑	Yes ❑

_____

41. Overall, to what extent did the information provided meet your needs?

Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely
1	2	3	4	5

Services for Persons with Hearing Impairments

If not applicable, skip to Question 46.

42. Was a TTY number available for booking purposes? Yes ❑ No ❑ Don't Know ❑

43. a. Did you require a TTY when in the airport? Yes ❑ No ❑ ->Skip to Q.45

b. If yes, was the equipment available? Yes ❑ No ❑

44. To what extent was it easy to access and use a TTY when you needed to?

Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	❑

45. Was there pen and paper available for your use at the following locations:

Airport information desk	Yes ❑	No ❑	Don't know ❑
Check-in counter	Yes ❑	No ❑	Don't know ❑
Boarding gate	Yes ❑	No ❑	Don't know ❑
On the plane	Yes ❑	No ❑	Don't know ❑

Mobility Aids (Wheelchair, Walker, etc.)

If not applicable, skip to Question 55.

46. Were your mobility aids carried free of charge? Yes ❑ No ❑

47. Were you permitted to use your manual folding wheelchair up to the boarding gate? Yes ❑ No ❑ N/A ❑

48. a. Did you require assistance transferring between your mobility aid and a carrier-provided mobility aid? Yes ❑ No ❑

b. If yes, to what extent did the assistance provided meet your needs?

Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely
1	2	3	4	5

49. a. Did you require assistance with transferring between a mobility aid and your passenger seat? Yes ❑ No ❑

b. If yes, to what extent did the assistance provided meet your needs?

Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely
1	2	3	4	5

50. Were you permitted to stow your manual folding wheelchair or other small aid in the passenger cabin? Yes ❑ No ❑ N/A ❑

51. To what extent were you satisfied with the way the carrier disassembled and reassembled your mobility aid for the trip?

Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	❑

52. Was your mobility aid lost or damaged by the air carrier? Yes ❑ No ❑ -> Skip to Q. 55

53. Did the carrier offer to provide a suitable temporary replacement without charge? Yes ❑ No ❑

54. Did the carrier take responsibility for repairing or replacing your mobility aid or offer to reimburse you for the replacement cost of the aid? Yes ❑ No ❑

Overall Experience

55. Overall, to what extent did you feel the carrier respected your right to determine whether or not you required any extra services during the flight?

Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely
1	2	3	4	5

56. Overall, to what extent do you feel staff were sensitive to your needs?

Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely
1	2	3	4	5

57. Overall, to what extent were you satisfied with the degree to which your needs were met during this air travel experience?

Not At All	To a Small Extent	To a moderate Extent	To a Large Extent	Entirely
1	2	3	4	5

TRAVELLER PROFILE

58. Sex: Male ❑ Female ❑

59. In what year were you born? _____

60. In what province/territory do you live? _____

OTHER COMMENTS

61. Do you have any other comments about this particular air travel experience?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

— THANK YOU—